

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JUNE D. KREGER

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the tireless contributions of one of my constituents, June D. Kreger, who was born in December of 1935. She began her VA service at the Salem, VA facility as a Medical Technologist in 1973. She and her husband, James P. Kreger Jr., moved to Florida when June was transferred to James A. Haley VA hospital in 1978. June worked at the James A. Haley VA Hospital until she accepted a position to help open the New Port Richey Veterans' Outpatient Clinic in 1985 under the leadership of Dr. Duke Miller. June Kreger retired after dedicating 20 years of service to our nation's heroes through her work at the VA. Upon her retirement she remarked that it was always her goal to help make Veterans smile. The great tennis legend, Arthur Ashe, once noted that, "True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost."

Through her daily service at the VA, June undoubtedly made a positive impact on the lives of countless local Veterans.

June is also the surviving spouse of Veteran James P. Kreger, Jr., who served in the United States Army and was stationed in Nuremberg, Germany. Both June and James were very active in their church upon retirement and also volunteered with the Meals on Wheels program for many years. At 87 years young, June Kreger lives in New Port Richey with her daughter, Wendy, and her son-in-law, Mike, who is also a Veteran. June is proud to be able to attend the Grand Opening of the new, expanded VA clinic on March 4th. She is excited to see another beautiful facility in our community dedicated to treating our local heroes and will be welcoming the new employees at the facility who will be entrusted with the task of providing outstanding quality care to all Veterans while also working to help them smile. It is my pleasure to recognize her and her family's service to our Nation on this special occasion.

HONORING LAKISHA WASHINGTON AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, Ms. LaKisha Washington is the program analyst with Group Practice Management under the chief of staff at the Orlando VA. In conjunction with her cur-

rent position, she also serves as the OVAHCS African American/Black Employment Program Special Emphasis Program Manager, is a member of the Central Florida Blacks in Government, and volunteers during her personal time with local non-profit organizations to render services to the homeless community and provide outreach services to local veterans.

Ms. Washington's occupational achievements have included conducting virtual training events to develop and implement special program initiatives that will enhance employment—including mock interviews and resume writing reviews. She has also collaborated with the assistance of her team to conduct financial preparedness for federal employees to discuss thrift savings plans, build a financial budgeting plan, and plan for retirement. Other achievements include the coordination of Martin Luther King Jr. Black History Month, and Juneteenth celebrations while also hosting Friday reflection forums to discuss various topics in the VA.

Her personal time is spent giving back to her community by serving the homeless with local non-profit organizations including Serving Out of Love and One Race Human Race. She's also a dedicated track and field mom.

Prior to her employment at the Orlando VA, Ms. Washington served as a U.S. Navy Veteran Hospital corpsman for 8 years and spent 14 years in total as a military-trained surgical technician/first assistant. Ms. Washington earned her Master's in Business Administration with a concentration in healthcare from American Sentinel College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Post University in 2022 while balancing fulltime employment and single parenting a high school teenager during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Washington is a woman who has maintained an outstanding reputation amongst her peers and has always been praised for her outstanding character. She is known to put her heart and soul into everything that she does and has a personality that can literally light up any room she enters.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ALBERT PIKE STATUE REMOVAL ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce the Albert Pike Statue Removal Act, which would require the permanent removal of the statue of Confederate General Albert Pike from federal land near Judiciary Square in the District of Columbia, which was illegally torn down in 2020 and is in storage. The bill also would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to donate the statue to a museum or similar entity. In the 116th Congress, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed this bill by voice vote. This bill is part of a series of

statue and memorial removal bills I am introducing during Black History Month.

This statue, which was dedicated in 1901, was constructed using both federal and private funds. The Freemasons, of which Pike was a member, donated the majority of the money needed to build and install the statue.

I oppose destroying Confederate statues, because I believe they should be moved to more appropriate settings, like museums, to avoid erasing an important part of history from which Americans must continue to learn. Pike, a Confederate general who served dishonorably and was forced to resign in disgrace, represents the worst of the Confederacy. Soldiers under his command were found to have mutilated the bodies of Union soldiers, and he was ultimately imprisoned after his fellow Confederate officers reported that he had been misappropriating funds. Adding to the dishonor of taking up arms against the United States, Pike dishonored even his Confederate military service. He certainly has absolutely no claim to be memorialized in the Nation's capital. Even those who do not want Confederate statues removed will have to justify affording Pike any honor considering his dishonorable history.

After meeting with the Freemasons, I believe the best course of action is to remove the statue and find a more appropriate place for it. Given the statue's divisive nature, the Freemasons themselves support the statue's removal.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

RECOGNIZING RICO MUNN

HON. JASON CROW

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Mr. CROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Rico Munn, Superintendent of Aurora Public Schools. At the end of the 2023 school year, Rico will step down as Superintendent to act in a supportive capacity to the district.

For more than nine years, Rico has served at the helm of the Aurora Public School (APS) district. He stepped into the role after the Aurora theater shooting when the community and many APS students were grieving. Years later, school districts were faced with an unprecedented pandemic, closing their doors to in-person learning for nearly two years. Rico worked with others in the APS system to develop a response to the pandemic that ensured students had the resources they needed to succeed.

APS is one of the largest and most diverse districts in Colorado, and Rico has always understood the importance of advocating relentlessly for and supporting the people, policies, and practices that lead to student success. Since 2013, when Rico stepped into the role of superintendent, APS has made strides in eliminating the graduation equity gap, increasing graduation rates, and decreasing dropouts.

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